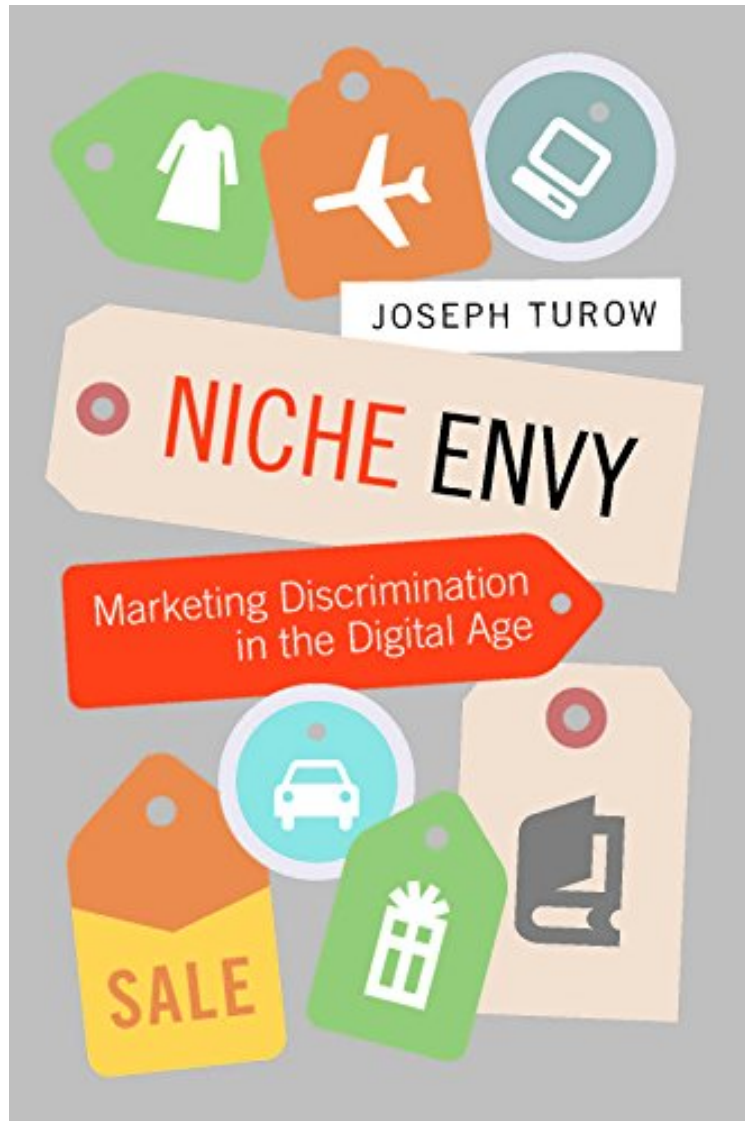


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Niche Envy: Marketing Discrimination in the Digital Age (MIT Press)

Joseph Turow

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Joseph Turow : Niche Envy: Marketing Discrimination in the Digital Age (MIT Press) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Niche Envy: Marketing Discrimination in the Digital Age (MIT Press):

0 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Cover Page By Sarah This product was in great shape, but I wasn't sure if it was the actual textbook I needed because it didn't have that design on the front cover like the picture portrays. Otherwise, it got here timely and I was satisfied. 12 of 12 people found the following review helpful. Insights Into The

Privacy-Marketing Axis
By Personalization Nerd
A provocative look at how the technologies of the Internet are being used as a testbed for the next generation of marketing messages, migrating away from the mass market model toward a model of market segmentation and discrimination. Building upon research that he and others have been conducting at UPenn's Annenberg Center, Turow describes how advertising has turned from mass promotion toward the strategies of direct marketing, product placement and public relations, enabled by new media and information technologies and justified by the industry's sense that these technologies have overly empowered the consumer to avoid their conventional messages. In the face of DVRs, remote controls, etc., marketers have decided that the tying of direct marketing messages to increasingly intrusive data collecting and mining methods is the wave of the future. Moreover, this is not an Internet-only problem. Turow points out that these techniques are only being tested on the Internet; they are migrating to (digital) television and conventional retail outlets. Turow suggests that all this really will lead to is a kind of deception death spiral --- consumers will lie about their personal information to gain access to marketing offers that they would otherwise not get (frequent flier programs, for example) while marketers will become increasingly intrusive as they seek the "truth" about their customers. The book's weaknesses emerge in the closing chapter, where Turow tries to outline a set of policy objectives to remedy this problem. Unfortunately, his primary instruments are those of consumer education and media labeling; good ideas, but probably unworkable in this environment. The resolution of this problem lies deeper than just refining the mechanisms and instruments of marketing. We have to confront some of the fundamental inconsistencies in our notions of the role of media and information, and in our economic models for sustaining them. Despite the weaknesses of his remedies, overall this is a vitally important look at what's going on "behind the curtain" of our evolving retail and media environments, and I highly recommend it.

We have all been to Web sites that welcome us by name, offering us discounts, deals, or special access to content. For the most part, it feels good to be wanted -- to be valued as a customer. But if we thought about it, we might realize that we've paid for this special status by turning over personal information to a company's database. And we might wonder whether other customers get the same deals we get, or something even better. We might even feel stirrings of resentment toward customers more valued than we are. In *Niche Envy*, Joseph Turow examines the emergence of databases as marketing tools and the implications this may have for media, advertising, and society. If the new goal of marketing is to customize commercial announcements according to a buyer's preferences and spending history -- or even by race, gender, and political opinions -- what does this mean for the twentieth-century tradition of equal access to product information, and how does it affect civic life? Turow shows that these marketing techniques are not wholly new; they have roots in direct marketing and product placement, widely used decades ago and recently revived and reimagined by advertisers as part of "customer relationship management" (known popularly as CRM). He traces the transformation of marketing techniques online, on television, and in retail stores. And he describes public reaction against database marketing -- pop-up blockers, spam filters, commercial-skipping video recorders, and other ad-evasion methods. Polls show that the public is nervous about giving up personal data. Meanwhile, companies try to persuade the most desirable customers to trust them with their information in return for benefits. *Niche Envy* tracks the marketing logic that got us to this uneasy impasse.

From *Publishers Weekly*
This fascinating and disturbing study considers the societal implications of the new database marketing, with which corporations delve deeply into customers' personal histories and interests using digital surveillance technology. Turow, a professor at the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School for Communication, looks back at the evolution of marketing through the 20th century, when the emergence of national brands, mass media and retail institutions like department stores led to the democratization of commerce. Today, he observes, an opposing trend is gathering steam: the drive toward "mass customization." With increasingly intrusive information technologies, retailers and manufacturers are segmenting customers, tailoring advertising and product offers to specific individuals and routinely using customers' personal data in ways few people understand. Furthermore, companies are seeking ways to actively discourage less profitable customers, and in some cases, are engaging in price discrimination, secretly offering a few favored customers better deals than others deemed less worthy. If these technology-driven trends continue, Turow (*Breaking Up America*) worries, the end result may be a world of individually customized entertainment and news where no common culture exists and there's an atmosphere of consumer anxiety and suspicion of being cheated in an impossibly complex electronic bazaar. (Oct.) Copyright © 2000; Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. "Many people have written about the perils and promise of database marketing, especially as it has become turbocharged by the internet. But few have done as insightful a job as Joseph Turow. His description of 'marketing discrimination' was an eye-opener for me, one of those rare new concepts that will never let you look at the world the same way again." --Tim O'Reilly, Founder and CEO, O'Reilly Media
Turow has beautifully sketched the rich history of customer categorization attempts both large and small to place consumers into boxes and then narrow their choices or fields of view accordingly. His analysis comes at a time when electronic commerce, both on- and offline, is poised to offer more boxes and do more with them. He offers valuable policy recommendations to help customers make sense of the corporate terrain they inhabit, and

explains why 'privacy policy' won't solve most of these problems." Jonathan Zittrain , Professor of Internet Governance and Regulation, University of Oxford "A lucid and unnerving read on the growing uses of database marketing." The Chronicle of Higher Education "Turow has beautifully sketched the rich history of customer categorization attempts both large and small to place consumers into boxes and then narrow their choices or fields of view accordingly. His analysis comes at a time when electronic commerce, both on- and offline, is poised to offer more boxes and do more with them. He offers valuable policy recommendations to help customers make sense of the corporate terrain they inhabit, and explains why 'privacy policy' won't solve most of these problems." Jonathan Zittrain , Professor of Internet Governance and Regulation, University of Oxford From the Back Cover "Turow has beautifully sketched the rich history of customer categorization -- attempts both large and small to place consumers into boxes and then narrow their choices or fields of view accordingly. His analysis comes at a time when electronic commerce, both on- and offline, is poised to offer more boxes and do more with them. He offers valuable policy recommendations to help customers make sense of the corporate terrain they inhabit, and explains why 'privacy policy' won't solve most of these problems." --Jonathan Zittrain, Professor of Internet Governance and Regulation, University of Oxford "Many people have written about the perils and promise of database marketing, especially as it has become turbocharged by the internet. But few have done as insightful a job as Joseph Turow. His description of 'marketing discrimination' was an eye-opener for me, one of those rare new concepts that will never let you look at the world the same way again." -- Tim O'Reilly, Founder and CEO, O'Reilly Media